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SUBJECT: UNGA/C-5: UNGA FIFTH COMMITTEE MEETS ON OIOS:
SPARKS FLY ON INTERNET POSTINGS OF REPORTS, THE MECHANISM
OF SUBMISSION, AND THE FULFILLMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Fifth Committee formally convened to consider Item 140 on the Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the annual report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), and Agenda Item 141 on the implementation of GA resolutions 48/218B, 54/244 and 59/272 ("Five Year Review of OIOS"). The Pakistan statement appeared to advocate reversing the policy, established in the 59th GA, of having OIOS reports submitted directly to the General Assembly. Several delegates criticized the practice of posting OIOS reports on mission websites. However, other delegations spoke in favor of the need for more transparency in regard to the reports. Both the G-77 and the EU called for OIOS recommendations to be implemented, particularly critical ones, to the greatest extent possible. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) PAKISTAN DEBATES SUBMITTING OIOS REPORTS TO GA: Ambassador Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Deputy Permanent Representative from Pakistan, cited what he understands to be discrepancies between previously passed resolutions regarding the manner by which OIOS reports are submitted. He observed that resolution 59/272, paragraph 3, which calls for reports to be submitted directly to the General Assembly (rather than first to the Secretary General) contradicts paragraph 1 of 59/272, which maintains procedures found in resolutions 48/218B and 54/244. His decision to recall the early resolutions of the 48th and 54th General Assemblies ignores the prevailing practice, since the passing of 59/272, of having reports submitted directly to the General Assembly. He goes on to say that it is an internal matter if reports are not submitted from the Secretariat to the General Assembly and believes that it is acceptable that some reports (as suggested by the IAAC) be withheld. OIOS Under Secretary General Inga-Britt Ahlenius defended the current practice as supported by the body of resolutions governing OIOS, remarking that "I would like to mention the importance of resolution 59/272, also referred to as the "Transparency Resolution", which decided that OIOS reports should be submitted directly to the General Assembly."

¶3. (U) INDEPENDENCE OF THE OIOS: A number of countries stressed the importance of maintaining the operational independence of the OIOS. The Permanent Representative of New Zealand speaking on behalf of CANZ remarked that "the operational independence of OIOS is critical to its effective functioning." To this end, CANZ believes it is essential for Member States to agree to a "robust" definition of the concept of "operational independence." (Note: G-77 and Russia do not agree with the definition of "operational independence" as provided by the IAAC and have offered language to clarify.) CANZ also is supportive of an internal oversight charter for OIOS that would detail the mandate, operations, accountability and reporting procedures of the office and its relationship with the General Assembly, the Secretary General, management and other oversight bodies.

¶4. (U) TRANSPARENCY AND THE INTERNET: The delegate of Switzerland noted that previous resolutions were passed "to

ensure respect for the separate and distinct roles of internal and external oversight mechanism. In the case of OIOS, this distinction has become somewhat blurred." The delegate then directed his attention to the practice of publishing OIOS reports on the internet, noting, "At present, such reports appear on the Internet before management has had an opportunity to react to their content. In our view, this practice is difficult to reconcile with the original purpose of OIOS, which is to assist the Secretary-General in fulfilling his internal oversight responsibilities." The Chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) David Walker made a brief unscripted remark and offered his opinion that there is a difference between posting a report on the internet and providing the material upon Member States' request. His preference was clearly in favor of the latter. The IAAC suggested Member States have access to reports so as not to limit their ability to obtain the information they need or decrease transparency. OIOS U/SYG Ahlenius did not directly address the internet aspect of the reports, but certainly let her overall sentiment be known, declaring that "The United Nations is a publicly financed Organization, accountable to its stakeholders and financiers. While such transparency in the very short-run might not always be pleasant, transparency serves in the long-run to improve the Organization."

15. (U) G77 CONCERNS ON CONTRADICTIONS AND LACK OF FULFILLMENT OF OIOS RECOMMENDATIONS: Sudan, speaking on behalf of the G77 and China raised a concern that "some recommendations contradict the mandates and decisions of the General Assembly." While the delegate did not provide a specific example of such a contradiction, he promised to address the matter further. The delegate also expressed G77

dissatisfaction as to the progress made on some key OIOS recommendations, noting that, "we are concerned at the decreased rate of implementation and the higher number of recommendations that received no response." Later he addressed a concern over "recommendations not started, especially those which are listed as critical."

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Pakistan's objectives in raising a supposed contradiction are not fully clear, but may indicate the personal interest of the DPR in reverting to a system where the OIOS sends reports only through the Secretary General. The G-77 have offered language in the draft resolution on the Five Year Review of OIOS that seeks to change the current reporting procedures. Many in the G-77 view resolution 59/272 as an anomaly that needs to be overturned. However, the U.S and other western allies will not support such a change. END COMMENT.
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